

Message Text

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21

ACTION AID-20

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PC-10 USIA-15 IO-14 DODE-00 AGR-20

INT-08 COME-00 DRC-01 RSC-01 /100 W

----- 047081

R 011235Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7699

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NDJAMENA 0850

AFDROUGHT

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY BRIDGE AT N'DJAMENA

REF: STATE 63772

1. FRENCH COUNSELLOR TO CHADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WHICH EXPLOITS FERRY SAYS HE HAS ALREADY MOVED SMALL FERRYBOAT TO DEEPER WATER DOWNSTREAM AND BELIEVES IT CAN CONTINUE OPERATIONS THROUGH SEASON AT LOWEST LEVEL CHARI RIVER. ALTHOUGH CAPACITY LIMITED, FERRY COULD MOVE FROM PRESENT EIGHT-HOUR TO 24-HOUR DAY IF NECESSARY. MEANWHILE TWO LARGER FERRIES CONTINUE CROSSING AT N'DJAMENA, BUT WITH INCREASING DIFFICULTY.

2. TIMING PROBLEM REFTEL RULES OUT CONSIDERATION OF EITHER PONTOON OR BAILEY BRIDGE. CRISIS WILL COME FROM MID-APRIL TO MID-JUNE IF IT COMES AT ALL, FAR TOO SOON FOR SHIPMENT AND ERECTION ANY KIND OF BRIDGE.

3. WE WILL DO NOTHING IN N'DJAMENA TO GET OUT FRONT ON THIS PROBLEM. FRG HAS THE ONLY OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR BRIDGE. HOWEVER, BECAUSE SOME OF OUR OWN PL-480 GRAIN COULD BE AFFECTED BY FAILURE OF FERRY, IT MIGHT USEFUL CONSIDER MORE FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVES THAN EITHER BRIDGE OR AIRLIFT. ONE OF THESE COULD

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BE HOVERCRAFT OR HOVERBARGE. UNDERSTAND THESE IN USE IN

ANTARCTICA BY U.S MILITARY FORCES AND IN SUCH PLACES AS
ALASKA AND CANADA WHERE THINLY FROSTED TUNDRA MUST BE PROTECTED
WHILE OIL DRILLING RIGS ARE MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE. ARPA
HAS DONE MUCH DEVELOPMENT WORK AND THERE ARE MANUFACTURERS
WHO MIGHT WELCOME HIGHLY PUBLICIZED USE THEIR CRAFT IN EMERGENCY
DROUGHT RELIEF IN THE SAHEL.

4. OTHER ALTERNATIVE IS TO ROUTE TRUCKS ACROSS RIVER AT BONGOR
OR LERE. MILEAGE ITSELF IS SMALL PROBLEM BUT FERRIES ARE IN
POOR SHAPE AT BOTH PLACES.

5. IF ALTERNATE ROUTES APPEAR FEASIBLE, WE WILL SUGGEST FRG
TEAM LOOK AT THEM. MEANWHILE IT MAY BE USEFUL FOR AID/W TO
LOOK INTO POSSIBILITIES SOME KIND OF HOVERCRAFT FOR RIVER CROSSING.
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Message Attributes

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